(No. XI.)

THE PASTIME.

Schenectady, Saturday, June 6, 1807.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For the Pastime.

ON CUSTOM.

We are apt to attribute the difference between men to nature; but principally, it is owing to custom. Human nature is originally nearly the same, and some philosophers, who perhaps have carried the point too far, have asserted that men would be perfectly alike in every respect, could they be treated in every respect alike. Not to loose ourselves in an argument so nice, let us leave it to be discussed by school-men, and attend only to what is clear, and easily to be decided. The power of custom is acknowledged; and well might the sage be puzzled when asked to distinguish this second nature from the first. Suppose a standard of right for morals and fashions, and that standard to be ours, how far have other nations wandered into error; and how absurd, cruel, and barbarous are many of their habits. See the poor Gentoo mount the funeral pile in the face of nature and of right, and pride herself in crimes of the most atrocious kind. The traces of warm humanity are congealed in her heart by the chilling touch of overbearing custom; and tho' her innate struggles would sufficiently convince one less hardened by habit—yet she heeds them not; the low whisperings of gentle nature are drowned in the boisterous clamours of artificial passion—She mounts the pile, and with a wild and frenzied smile of approbation, is buried in the flame. We love our parents, we obey them when young, and esteem their wishes a command which it were a sin not to regard as sacred. With the innocent prattlings of infancy are we pleased to amuse their prime of life, and when age has made them weak and infirm, we soften their declining years by the tenderest attentions. To desert them when rendered helpless by time, would be base, unfeeling, inhuman—and before we can bring ourselves to the step, every tender and delicate affection in the bosom must first be subdued. Yet, strong and powerful as seems this sentiment, custom has, in some countries, destroyed it, and planted in its place a destructive and inhuman principle. When the limbs of the parent are unnerved by age, and too feeble to aid himself, at the moment when most in need of filial love to support him, he is committed to the merciless wave in an osier bark—the foaming flood bears him away, cheerful in the hope of soon ending his cares, and thankful that the supreme spirit has blessed him with

a son so dutiful! Poor old man! when hunger and thirst assail thee, and the pitiless storm rages o'er thy whitened head, does tyrant custom still hold her sway in thy bosom? Yes! for nature is blotted out, and the traces of humanity are wiped away.

What seems more consonant to nature than the fondness of a mother for her infant child? This principle is uniform thro' creation, and woe be to the wretched philosophy which would persuade us that in the least it depends on custom or caprice. A tender mother guarding the slumbers of infant beauty—who is there whose sensibility is not moved at the view?—who that does not perceive, as he casts his eye upon the picture, feeling, nature, and creation, crying "IT IS RIGHT." Oh Heavens! is it possible custom could eradicate from any bosom a sentiment so interwoven with bliss, and not at the same time shut up every avenue to happiness? Yet are there beings who barter their offspring for gold, and still can smile! The fact would almost persuade me that the rule of right depended on the whim of man, that nothing was certain, that the Pyrrhonian philosophy was as good as any other. But it is not so. There *is* a right and wrong, and the instances I have adduced prove only the power of custom to blind, and make us forget. She steals softly and imperceptibly upon us, and vigilant must we be to elude her seductive snares. She is ever at war with nature, and one of the great duties of man is to combat her. If she can drive from our breasts not only parental, and filial affection, but make us forget even the preservation of self, and this too without discovering to us the glaring absurdity of her follies, how often, and carefully ought we to examine our hearts for the motive and principle which governs us!

For the Pastime.

TRAVELLING MEMORANDA.

(Continued.)

Jan. 30—Sunday—This is a day of amusement for all classes of people in the city. They have put on their best clothes, and appear very decently. I have noticed, with my glass, children apparently not more than 3 and 4 years old, dressed in the habit of black friars. Their enormous cock'd hats, and long loose gowns, appear most ridiculously!

Feb.—The officers of the Protect having had their hearts melted by a dose of the "root of evil," we were permitted to go on shore. After plodding with the "sons of care," a few hours, I went to see the public gardens, on the outside of the city walls, and very near to the Marino. These gardens are in the Italian style, and contain about acres, admirably laid out in walks and arbours of the orange, lemon, and citron trees, with many beautiful rows of the laurel, myrtle, and other evergreens. In the cen-

ter is a beautiful aviary of singing birds. I observed here, two splendid fountains—the first represents a Sea God, holding a fish by the tail, which spouts up the water to an astonishing height. The statue is of marble, and placed on a foundation of earth, artfully covered with many flowering shrubs. The whole stands in a large marble bason, which receives the water. The bason contains many uncommonly beautiful gold fish, which all crowd to the side where they perceive a visitor, to receive crumbs of bread and morsels of food.

The other statue represents Neptune, with his trident, spouting water, situated as is the first. The streams which fall into the basons, water every part of the gardens, by means of pipes, and artificial brooks, very fancifully bordered with lilies, water cresses, and other flowers. The scenery of the place exceeds every idea that my imagination formed of the Elysian Fields. It is now the height of winter, yet the flowers are in bloom, the orange, the lemon, and the citron trees, are loaded with fruit, and, at the same time, blossoming!

Feb. 7—During the season of the carnival, there are masquerades in Palermo twice a week. There was one last night. With Mr. ——'s aid I obtained a domino and mask, and accompanied that gentleman to the entertainment. It began about midnight, and lasted until morning. Every one is dressed according to his own fancy, and as no body utters a syllable, their most intimate friends cannot discover them in their disguise. The nobility and gentry of the city take great delight in this entertainment. It favours intrigue, and is the Marino of the winter.

The most striking characters that I saw, were a lady, richly dressed in the habit of a Turk: a young coquette, Miss ——, dressed as an old woman of eighty, who "grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile:"—and a French Hussar, shewing his *hauteur* when a chimney sweep dusted his lac'd coat, and compelled him to retire! A country girl, selling posies, was seriously addressed by an old Friar, who made love to her with all his might, and very significantly declared, "he had a sneaking kindness for her." But the trollop gave the holy man a smart box on the ear, which knock'd off his mask, and I discovered it to be the American Consul! A Nun gave me a pinch, and I to-day learned that it was Miss ——. This nipping is the method they use to inform their friends that they know them. All the other characters were Harlequins, old Gaffiers and Goodies, men dressed in womens clothes, and women dressed in mens—officers, w—s, pilgrims, and jumping jacks. The music was good, and there were about twelve hundred persons present.

This morning I went to view the Cathedral Church, called "Madre Cheisa." It is a gothic building, and the most magnificent in Sicily. On the outside, its appearance is not uniformly splendid: but the interior is singularly superb. It is supported

by eighty pillars, or columns, of the finest white marble, and the niches, altars, etc. are of granite and agate. Nothing can exceed the richness of this stupendous edifice. It is about three hundred feet long, and the whole in one grand room. The light comes from above, but the windows are so artfully disposed in small cupalos, that they are not perceived. Thus the whole seems the work of enchantment. The walls are covered with statues, altars, and paintings, 30 feet square. The Dome, in the nave of the church, is 60 feet in diameter, and 150 from the floor. The whole of the dome is covered with a painting, representing the ascension. The figures being very large, and placed so high above our heads, it has a remarkably fine effect. From the centre hangs a golden chandelier of * * * branches.

In a recess of this church, are the relics and bones of St Rosalia. They are preserved in a large silver box, eight feet square: before which, 20 candles (in ponderous silver candlesticks, five feet in height) are continually burning.

The grand altar is covered with silver candlesticks: the lights are never extinguished. All other ornaments and utensils, are of gold. At the farther end of the church, are the tombs of their Norman Kings, who once extended their power from Normandy to Sicily. These are of red marble, and nearly one thousand years old. "William the Good," died in 1170.

There is not a piece of wood in all this pile of building. The whole is of the richest variegated marble, polished with the greatest taste. The chasteness of its design; the neatness, beauty, and elegance of its execution, cannot be excelled.

[To be continued.]

BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF DERMODY.

(Continued.)

On his arrival in England, it was his good fortune to be placed under the immediate notice and protection of the Earl of Moira, who, having taken command of the army destined for the coast of France, appointed Dermody to a second lieutenancy in the waggon corps. In this situation he conducted himself with much propriety, excepting a few irregularities (the consequence of intoxication) which occurred while he was stationed in Southampton; and the greatest expectations were formed by his friends, of his becoming, in a short time, a thoroughly reformed and respected character. They imagined that the active and perilous profession into which he had entered, would quickly occasion him to abandon his follies and pernicious habits; and that the society and conversation of the elevated characters by whom he was now daily surrounded, would create in him a dignified emulation, and inspire him with a noble ardour for military enterprize. Nor did he, in this respect, disappoint their liberal conjectures. He was a sharer in all the dangers and difficulties encountered by the English army in this unfortunate expedition. He visited many remarkable places on the continent; and among others, the tomb of Abelard, in Lombardy, on which occasion he very narrowly escaped being made a prisoner. He was in almost every considerable action, and received several dangerous wounds; one of

which in some degree disfigured his face, and another deprived him of the use of his left hand, a bullet having passed directly through it. It is due to his memory to say, that while he continued in the service (which was till the British army returned to England) he displayed much bravery; and was noticed rather for the modesty and propriety of his behaviour, than for any striking deformity of character, or disreputable propensity. On the reduction of this army, he was put on the half pay list, which, though a small, was yet a certain income, and sufficient to satisfy the urgent calls of necessity.

Having acquired much useful information in his absence, he determined to visit London, renounce his former follies, and begin a new life of glory. His warm and wild imagination formed scenes of enjoyment which he vainly considered were there to be felicitous, variable and perpetual. Full of these romantic ideas, he arrived in the metropolis, and was placed by the Earl of Moira, at his expense, in the house of Mr. Faulder, the book-seller. But the irregularities and eccentricities of Dermody were but ill suited to the order and economy of Mr. Faulder's domestic arrangements, and he of course remained with him but a short time.

The virtuous resolutions which he had formed were soon disregarded. The town had pleasures which he pursued with an avidity which his slender fortune could not support, and he often became involved in pecuniary troubles, from which the bounty of his patrons generally released him. The frequency of these applications at length induced Lord Moira to investigate the cause; the result was by no means favourable to Dermody, and his patron severely reprobated his conduct, and threatened to discontinue his favours if he did not amend it. On his promise of reformation, however, and of adopting a steady course of life, he was again restored to favour. But his resolution was not proof against the allurements of pleasure, and the impulse of his passions; and becoming more and more addicted to low company, he finally entirely disregarded the advice of his benefactor, who, hopeless of reclaiming him, after rescuing him from a prison, into which his dissipation and extravagance had plunged him, wrote him an admonitory letter, inclosing a liberal present, and informed him, that until he manifested a thorough reformation, and a disposition to appear respectable in society, of which he had little hopes, he should withdraw his aid and protection.—This loss was severely felt by Dermody, who was totally unprepared for it, and he felt the deepest regret at the consideration of having excited his lordship's displeasure. Having thus lost his benevolent patron, he became hopeless of retrieving his character, and sunk still deeper into the mire of intemperance; and, mingling with the very lowest class of society, expended the money he had received in their destructive debaucheries. He was now reduced to extreme want, and compelled to take up his residence in a wretched garret, without any prospect of relief.

From this distress he was however relieved by Mr. Raymond, and being newclad, and introduced to the society of gentlemen, he produced a volume of poems, which, through the kindness of Mr. Allingham, were sold for a liberal price to Messrs. Vernor and Hood, by whom they were published; this collection contains the Retrospect, written, as has been observed, on his passage from Ireland, and the Pursuit of Patronage, two poems of considerable length and much merit.

The zeal of the few friends who were now acquainted with his distresses, soon procured him a number of advocates. His story became extensively known: and among the arbiters of wit, and the admirers of poetical composition, his talents and situation were frequent subjects of discourse. The force of his genius was generally acknowledged, and from many who interested themselves in his behalf he reaped more solid advantages than praise and admiration. Still, however, pursuing his former courses, notwithstanding the liberality of his friends, he continued to be involved in new troubles; but as he lost one patron, it was his fortune to obtain another.—He was no-

ticed and supplied with considerable sums of money both by Mr. Addington and Sir James Bland Burges, author of the Epic Poem of Richard the First. Previous to the commencement of his acquaintance with the latter, Dermody, through a piece of low chicanery practised on his credulity by the clerk to the agent of his late regiment, had been deprived of his half pay. This circumstance gave him much uneasiness, and added greatly to his embarrassments. From the state of despondency and extreme want to which he was now reduced, he was rescued by the liberality of Sir James, who admired the poetical talents of Dermody, and was solicitous to save him from the grasp of penury, and render his talents useful to society, and honourable to himself—he not only furnished him with money to deliver him from present wants, and to procure him suitable clothes, but recommended him, with much zeal, to the society for the Literary Fund, from which he several times received money, as his exigencies required.

[To be continued.]

LITERARY PARAGRAPHS.

With pleasure we announce the intention of LUCIUS MANLIUS SARGENT of Boston, to publish an accurate, elegant, and cheap, edition of the WORKS of TIBULLUS, the Prince of Elegiack Poets, the rival of *Horace*, and the friend of *Ovid*. Mr. Sargent is known as the elegant translator of the CULEX of Virgil, and as the author of much chaste and classical Latin Poetry. Of these efforts, those best prepared to judge have spoken in terms of penegyrick. This attempt to strike out of the *beaten* path: to provide for the man of learning, as well as the student at college, is almost unprecedented. Many American editions of Latin and Greek school books have been issued—but we have gone no farther. We ardently wish that this attempt to extend our view of ancient literature may be successful. Like the poor widow, in the scripture, we gladly contribute our *mite*, by soliciting the RICH MAN, the SCHOLAR, and the PATRIOT, *those who can and ought*, to support this arduous undertaking.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

For the Pastime.

[The lover of poetry will peruse the following lines with no common delight. They were written by a man of taste;—one, on whom the muse has smiled with unusual complacency.]

To Miss ****** on her marriage with Mr. Fay.

More mild than the flowers the brown reapers meet,
As they gather the full ripen'd corn,
Eliza appear'd—but more fair; and as sweet
As the heath scented breath of the morn!
Titinia, queen of the small, tiny race,
Whose power the planets obey,
Beheld her; and smit with the charms of her face,
From the cradle convey'd her away.

From vases of cowslips she wash'd her with dew
Collected with infinite care,
From Jessemine, Amaranth, Myrtle, and Yew,
And dried her with Venus's hair.
She crown'd her with Misselto, Vervain and Bay,
And made her a Fairy confest—
Resign'd her the wand of such mystical sway,
And the lotus she fix'd on her breast.

The queen then, exulting, pronounc'd this decree,
That Eliza a fairy remain,
And a day, too far distant for mortals to see,
Should her mandate compleatly explain.
Her absence, her nurse, nor her parents e'er knew,
Time brought on her wish'd wedding day,
And then all her friends found the prophecy true,
And hail'd her, a genuine FAY.

For the Pastime.

[These lines were written at a very early age, by a young lady of taste and sensibility. We regret that she *hung her harp upon the willows*, while its strings had been so seldom touched. The hand *qui quondam gracili modulatus avena carmen*, has given an earnest of poetical talent, which, cultivated as it should have been, might haved *claimed* the laurel without *soliciting* it.]

ADDRESS TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

Ah lovely bird! whose dulcet strain
Soft floats along the air,
Whose note can soften every pain,
And silence ev'ry care:
Oh! teach me thy heart melting lay,
Which gentle Peace can breathe,
Then with a song I'll hail the day,
And welcome in the Eve.
While rapture thrills in ev'ry line,
And ev'ry thought is pleasure,
I'll hail thy goodness, *power divine*,
Which granted such a treasure!

For the Pastime.

FRAGMENTS or POETRY found at the Falls of Mount Ida, Troy. Several passages were obliterated, by being frequently trodden on; and those which remained, have been traced with much difficulty.

——— Shunning the noisy haunts of men
He lov'd to wander here. Few his friends.
He car'd not for the crowd. He heard, unhurt,
The scornful jest of cruel ignorance.—
The poison'd arrow, which misfortune aim'd,
Pierc'd not his heart, in such bold armour clad
That ev'ry point was blunted at the touch
And dropp'd unheeded down!
* * * * * * * * * * * * *

——— Oh! he would gaze,
With rapture gaze, upon this fairy scene—
He would moralize the opening leaf,
And seem to find in ev'ry budding flow'r,
The noblest tribute to its MAKER's praise.
* * * * * * * * * * * * *

——— He joy'd to mark
The silver stream swift gliding 'twixt the banks
Which seem'd to smile in extacy, to see
Their lovely foilage in the polish'd wave!
Hour by hour he sat on yonder bridge, to view
The distant waters torn up by the stones,
And rippling thro' the craggy rocks. Then rose—
And trac'd with hasty steps the forest path,
Till, bursting on the astonish'd sight,
The stream impetuous plunges the abyss
With roar tremendous. Impatient of restraint

Ichabod Beverly—To Correspondents—Erratum.

It breaks its bounds ——— Here he paus'd—
For inspiration liv'd in ev'ry wave,
And the aw'd soul was mute.
* * * * * * * * * * *

———— 'Neath the cataract, where the stream
Dashes the cliff, and bursts with fury foaming,
Where the wave below, impetuous drives along
From rock to rock—sleeps the wild spirit of the storm.
A cave, form'd by the overhanging precipice,
Her cell. And along the banks
As dies its tumult, and subsides its force,
The Muses love to wander hand in hand,
And, as it winds its gentle course along,
To trace, thro' fertile vales, the placid, silvery tide!
* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From the Providence Gazette.

Some of the first characters of the present day have been sadly bedizened in sapphick verse; why then may not ICHABOD BEVERLY undergo the same operation?

When spring had melted all the snow,
And streams had not forgot to flow,
A man went forth to plough and hoe—
His name was *Ichabod Beverly.*

Tall was his form: his hair, coal black,
Hung like a lynchpin down his back;
An eel-skin kept it in its sack,
With gripe of French fraternity.

His hat was in condition sad:
What'er his thoughts were, good or bad,
He there recorded all he had:—
Of chalk was made his memory.

He met a man, (and I know who:)
Says he, "Kind Sir, how do you do?"
"I'm very well; how is't with you?"
"I thank you, very cleverly:"

"Well, what *of him?*"—I've told you fair
All that I know, and all I care.
If more you wish from me, then fare-
Well to your curiosity.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

Our friends are requested to be particularly cautious of sending us pieces as original, or unpublished, when they are not decided as to their authenticity. Many disagreeable circumstances may result from mistakes of this nature, and we wish to guard against them. These remarks are occasioned by A SONG in our last, stated to have been written by Moore, and then first made publick. We indistinctly recollected the lines when they were handed to us, but we have since found them among Little's Poems.

TYRO will excuse us for declining to publish his lines. They display much ease and sprightliness of versification, but they want *pith*, and energy of thought.

ERRATUM.—In our last, for "*her confidence in God was first,*" read, "HER CONFIDENCE IN GOD WAS FIXED."